

## SUCCESS STORY Innovation Is In Our Nature

### SPOKANE ORGANIZATION EDUCATES PUBLIC THROUGH RX ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM

Approximately three years ago, the Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council (GSSAC) became concerned about the increase in prescription drug (RX) abuse. Spokane County became ground zero for pharmacy robberies (still the highest rate in the nation), steep increases in overdose deaths from Rx opiates across the state, and statewide data revealed that Rx opiates have passed up meth in our prenatal drug exposure in Washington State.

#### How did Commerce and GSSAC help solve the problem?

GSSAC replicated the success of our Washington State Meth Watch Program, and developed a WA Rx Watch prevention program. This unique prevention program was based on the development of a community presentation that educated and inform community members across the state on the dangers of Rx abuse. In addition, GSSAC developed a 4 hour Train the Trainer class that provided instruction and support for community member to present at the local level.

Through the Commerce Community Mobilization program, GSSAC partnered with NW HIDTA to develop this program that was designed just for Washington State with current state trends and data.

**Benefits:** The WA Rx Watch prevention program has been implemented across the state, including several tribes. In addition, our program has been shared with several other states. Helping to reduce the impact of substance abuse and violence on our local communities has been at the forefront of our work with our Coalition. The WA RX Watch.

**Results:** To date, there has been over 4000 community members trained through this program and over 300 community volunteers have been through our four hour Train the Trainer class. Community Mobilization efforts across the state of Washington have helped to strengthen the prevention outreach focused on reducing prescription drug abuse and the related crimes.

With Washington State being in the top ten states for Rx drug overdose death and more people dying from Rx overdose than vehicle crashes, we need to be concerned. **Every \$1 invested in prevention returns up to \$15.00 savings in treatment and justice systems.** This saves every taxpayer in the state of Washington.

**Summary:** With established statewide networks like Community Mobilization, and the multiplying effect of conducting Train the Trainer classes, we are conducting Rx abuse prevention all across Washington State. Having a dedicated network of prevention professionals available through Community Mobilization continues to help leverage local resources to make GSSAC's WA RX Watch program a success.



**Department of Commerce**  
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